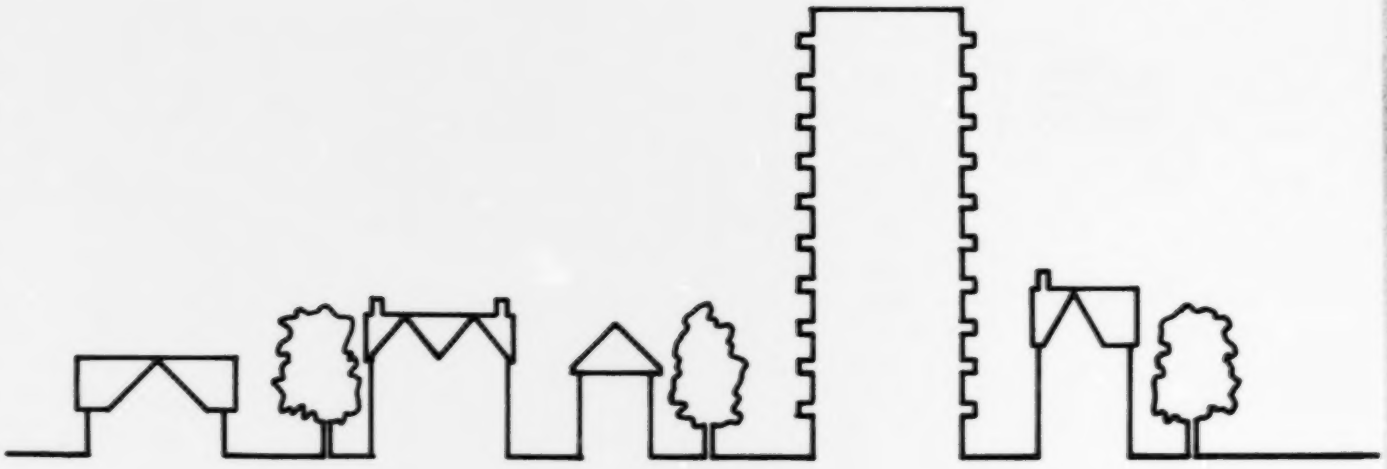

STUDY OF RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION AND RENTAL HOUSING CONSERVATION

PART 5: DATA SOURCES AND PROBLEMS

PREPARED FOR
THE ONTARIO MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING
AND THE ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF ONTARIO

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NOTE:

This is a consultants' report. Any statements or opinions expressed herein are those of the writers or of persons quoted and, unless otherwise noted, are not necessarily endorsed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing, Government of Ontario, or the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

FOREWORD

This study was commissioned jointly by the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. Funding for the study was provided by the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing through the Housing Renovation and Energy Conservation Unit of the Community Housing Wing. The Ministry's chief representative on the study was Mr. George Przybylowski of the Housing Renovation and Energy Conservation Unit. In this capacity, Mr. Przybylowski was the prime client contact throughout the study process and the consultants wish to express their gratitude to him for his considerable personal committment to this study and the many creative and useful suggestions he made during the course of the investigations.

The findings, conclusions and recommendations contained in the various volumes of the study report are those of the consultants as are any factual errors they may contain. The report does not constitute Ontario Government or A.M.O. policy but is a report to these two organizations for their consideration.

Peter G. McInnis
Study Director

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This document forms one volume of an eleven volume study report commissioned jointly by the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (A.M.O.) in July, 1982. The prime objectives of the study were:

1. To examine the opportunities and constraints that exist for meeting some of the future additional housing needs in Ontario during the 1980's and 1990's through the intensification of existing residential neighbourhoods.

2. To examine some of the major forces at work that have and could threaten the conservation of the existing stock of rental housing and the tenants that occupy this stock.

These objectives were formulated in response to concerns on the part of the Ministry and A.M.O. regarding recent and emerging trends in housing and urban development and population growth and change in Ontario.

It is safe to assume that there will continue to be a demand for more rental and ownership housing units in Ontario during the 1980's and 1990's due to both an absolute increase in population and an increase in the number of households. However, there is growing evidence that this demand could be different in nature than during the last decade. While demand will continue to be focused in urban areas, there will likely be increasing pressure for inner city housing particularly in the larger urban centres such as Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton. Also, households are getting smaller and older; and more people are beginning to accept the prospect of never being able to afford to own a home. These trends suggest that there will be an increasing demand for smaller dwellings. While consumer preference information may not support this, the general state of the economy and the future affordability of housing may dictate these demands.

The Government of Ontario and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario are concerned about how these additional and somewhat different housing needs of the 80's and 90's will be met, particularly in light of the downturn in the construction of new private rental housing; the economic prospects for the 80's and 90's and the likely restraints on public expenditures related to new facilities and services and socially assisted housing; and the increasing difficulty of providing new housing through large scale redevelopment and/or a further expansion outwards of Ontario's urban fabric.

There are two major approaches to creating additional housing: 1) building new and 2) making more efficient (intensive) use of the housing stock that currently exists. This study is aimed primarily at the latter and specifically at the potential for meeting some of the future housing needs in

the Province through the conversion of the existing stock of some 1,200,000 grade-related owner occupied dwellings in the Province. The extent to which this study is concerned with new housing was limited to the opportunities that might exist for small scale residential infill in residential neighbourhoods.

In addition to being concerned about meeting additional housing needs, the Ministry and A.M.O. were concerned about conserving the existing rental stock in a safe and livable condition for at least the same number of households as it currently accommodates. While this aging/conservation issue is by no means a new one, the nature of the issue will likely be quite different in the future. Until the late 1950's, the vast majority of housing in the Province was grade-related and owner occupied, and the conservation of these types of dwellings usually happened as a matter of course without much concern or assistance on the part of governments. In the last 30 years, however, the housing stock profile has changed dramatically with the advent of the high-rise apartment building. Rental apartments in multiple unit buildings form a much larger proportion of the stock than ever before. Approximately two-thirds of the over one million rental housing units in Ontario are located in high-rise or low-rise/walk-up multiple unit apartment buildings. Forty percent or 434,000 of the total rental units are in high-rise buildings. The conservation of the apartment rental stock has never been a serious issue in the past because of the relative newness of this stock. However, as these buildings age during the 80's and 90's (many are already 20 years old), serious attention will have to be given to the efforts that will be required to maintain these units in a safe and livable condition and within the economic reach of a large majority of the population. Therefore, the second objective of this study was in part, to examine the type of building repairs and improvements (and their associated costs) that will be required to conserve the Province's stock of some 434,000 high-rise rental apartments over the next 20 years.

A second rental housing conservation concern of the Ministry and A.M.O. had to do with the perceived loss of low-income rental accommodation that has traditionally been available in the form of rooms and apartments in grade-related dwellings in older neighbourhoods. Specifically, the study was to examine the extent of the loss of this type of housing due to demolition and deconversion resulting from the gentrification of these dwellings and the impact these losses have had on tenants.

The investigations were carried out by a series of five individual consultants working under the direction of a sixth consultant retained to coordinate and direct the study investigations. The work of each consultant was monitored and reviewed by a core study group made up of the five consultants, the study director and representatives of MOMAH and AMO.

Core Study Group

Study Director:	Peter McInnis Klein & Sears Research and Planning Limited
Consultants:	Michael Adams Environics Research Group
	Jack Klein Klein & Sears, Architects
	Greg Lampert Clayton Research Associates
	Frank Lewinberg Lewinberg Consultants
	Peter Milligan Walker, Poole, Milligan
Ministry Representatives	Sue Corke Gary McAllister George Przybylowski
A.M.O. Representatives:	Mayor W. McLean Town of Ajax
	Gwyn Simmons City of Ottawa Non-Profit Housing Corporation
Special Assistant To Core Group:	Betty Kaser

While the consultants' work on this study began formally at the beginning of July, 1982, some considerable effort was spent in advance of this start-up by a steering committee of Ministry and AMO representatives in developing terms of reference and a work plan with the Study Director that reflected the findings of an extensive and detailed review of the literature pertaining to the issues in question. This literature review was carried out by David Hulchanski for the Ministry during April and May of 1982 and has been published under separate cover. The prime purpose of this review was to identify the extent to which the issues in question had already been considered and the findings and conclusions that had been reached in order that the consultants' work could be focussed on those issues about which there is limited knowledge or understanding. Also, this review provided a valuable basis for establishing certain propositions to be tested in the study.

The investigations, particularly those relating to Objective #1, were carried out on a case study area basis in the municipalities of Toronto, North York, Hamilton, Kingston, Woodstock and Ottawa with special input from municipal officials in Thunder Bay. These municipalities were selected to reflect the fact that many of the issues under investigation were more associated with larger urban areas as well as to provide, at the same time, a range of sizes of municipalities for comparative purposes.

The overall study report is organized into 11 separate volumns. These 11 volumes follow the 5 part organization of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study investigations as indicated below:

PART #	TITLE (Prime Consultants)	VOLUME #
1	Summary of Findings And Recommendations (Klein & Sears)	1
2	Economic And Demographic Trends for the 80's and 90's (Clayton Research Associates)	2
3	Residential Intensification And Future Housing Needs	
	3.1 Physical Potential (Clayton Research Associates)	3
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4	Conserving The Existing Rental Housing Stock	
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5 Data Sources And Problems (Clayton Research Associates) 11

This particular volume (Volume #11) of the study report was prepared by Mr. Greg Lampert of Clayton Research Associates.

PART 5

DATA SOURCES AND PROBLEMS

Prepared by:
Clayton Research Associates

DATA SOURCES AND PROBLEMS

1.0 PURPOSE

This section outlines the main data sources which were used in the analysis of the dwelling stock and occupants in the MOMAH/AMO Conversion and Conservation Study as well as the problems encountered with this data in the course of the study - and the way they were solved by the study team. Because of the vast wealth of information potentially available to researchers from the Ontario Ministry of Revenue assessment files, a special concluding comment is devoted to presenting suggestions on how this source could be more effectively utilized.

2.0 DATA SOURCES

A number of potential data sources were explored for use in this study but the most fruitful sources were:

- Ontario Ministry of Revenue assessment files;
- Municipal data sources; and
- Census of Canada.

The types of information which were sought from each of these sources are outlined in the following sections.

2.1 Ontario Ministry of Revenue Assessment Files

The Ontario Ministry of Revenue maintains a computerized record of all properties in the Province for establishing the assessment for property taxation purposes. While not designed as an information base for studies such as this one, these computerized files represented a potentially extremely valuable source for the study since the files are supposed to include (among other things) information on:

- dwelling type,
- tenure,
- year built,
- floor area,
- lot area,
- zoning,
- number of stories,
- construction type,
- ages of occupants, and
- household size.

Unfortunately, there were a number of problems associated with using the assessment data. These included:

- Missing or incomplete data - for many of the properties the information was not on the file; this was particularly true for rental apartment properties where the structural information is not used in deriving a value for taxation purposes; also, in some cases, apparently the occupant data was not completely up to date.

- Lengthy and costly processing times - because the files are not designed for production of the types of data required by this study, the production of the data was quite slow and extremely costly; mainly because of the costs of processing, it was not possible to extend the analysis of the assessment data to include areas of the province outside the six case study areas; and

. Incompatible definitions - there are evidently some differences between the definitions used in the assessment data and those used in the Census of Canada, for example, there appear to be differences in the definition of "dwelling unit" between the two data sources.

Despite these problems, the assessment data provided some valuable insights on the utilization of the grade-related housing stock in each case study area as well as the dwelling size and age of this stock and, most notably, an analysis of the changes in the rental stock over time (from the Housing Occupancy Analysis System which is described more fully in a later section of this Appendix). However, compared to the potential information available from this source, the output yielded for this study was disappointingly meagre.

2.2 Municipal Data Sources

Some municipalities, notably the City of Toronto, maintain special computerized files which contain upgraded assessment file data as well as some other housing stock information. Excellent co-operation on the part of the City of Toronto Planning and Development Department yielded some extremely useful information on the capacity of the existing dwelling stock in the City, under current zoning regulations, to accommodate additions or infill. Unfortunately, similar information could not be obtained for other areas.

All case study areas did respond to special requests for information from their internal files on activities such as demolitions, condominium conversions etc.

2.3 Census of Canada

Unfortunately, the timing of the study was such that much of the wealth of detailed information which will be available from the 1981 Census of Canada was not available at the time the study was undertaken. The Census information available at the time of the study included:

. population,
. household sizes and characteristics,
. age of household head,
. dwelling types, and
. tenure.

Special cross-tabulations of 1981 Census information were obtained for these variables and they formed the basis for the dwelling stock and occupant estimates prepared for the study.

Key Census information which was not available for the study included;

. income,
. number of rooms per dwelling,
. type of heating,

. rents and mortgage payments,
. age of dwelling, and
. need for repairs.

In order to help fill the gap left by this key information, especially in relation to dwelling age, special tabulations were obtained from the 1971 Census and from the 1980 Statistics Canada Household Income, Facilities and Equipment Survey; these were used in formulating estimates based on the 1981 Census data.

Besides the lack of the key information from the 1981 Census, there were also some data reliability problems with the Census data, especially in relation to the dwelling type breakdowns. No allowance was made in the study for these data reliability problems.

2.4 Combining the Data from Different Sources

With the exception of data from the Housing Occupancy Analysis System, it was decided to standardize all dwelling stock and occupant information to the 1981 Census data output rather than present conflicting data from all the sources. This was done, not because the data from the other sources was necessarily inferior (though in some cases it, no doubt, was) but because:

. Presentation of similar but different data pertaining to what is supposed to be the same stock of dwellings would create confusion among both authors and readers;

. Census information is the most widely used source of housing stock and occupant data; and

. The only recent dwelling stock and occupant information available on a province-wide basis is from the Census.

This is not to deny that there are some problems with the Census data (in particular, there appear to be inconsistencies between the 1976 and 1981 Census estimates by dwelling type); however, on balance, it was considered that standardizing all data to the Census estimates was the best option available.

The data for the Housing Occupancy Analysis System (HOAS) were not standardized to Census definitions because an important component of the HOAS results related to converted dwelling units which may not have met the Census definition of a dwelling. The detailed data and estimates are presented in the sections and appendices to which they pertain elsewhere in this report. The next section outlines the methodology used in formulating the estimates of the physical potential of the stock.

3.0 THE METHODOLOGY FOR FORMULATING THE ESTIMATES OF PHYSICAL POTENTIAL OF THE STOCK

This section examines the methodologies that were used in formulating the estimates of utilization and the physical potential of the grade-related stock to accommodate the various conversion models.

3.1 Utilization of the Grade-Related Dwelling Stock

Conversion Models 1 and 2 relate to the accommodation of additional persons or families within an existing grade-related dwelling. In assessing the physical potential for such conversions, it is necessary to examine the current usage of the stock in terms of number of people per given area. The 1981 Census of Canada information on numbers of persons related to numbers of rooms was not available for this study and, in any case, numbers of rooms is considered to be a poor proxy for dwelling size in this type of analysis.

Table 3.1: Comparison Of Census And Assessment Owner-Occupied Grade-Related Dwelling Stock Case Study Areas, 1981

	Census of Canada (Dwelling Units)	Property Assessment (Properties)	Assessment /Census (Percent)
Toronto	88,000	68,518	77.9
North York	86,400	79,550	92.1
Hamilton	60,240	56,948	94.5
Ottawa	40,925	36,654	89.6
Kingston	8,200	7,522	91.7
Woodstock	6,115	5,998	98.1
Total Case Study Area	289,880	255,190	88.0

Source: Special tabulations from 1981 Census of Canada and Ministry of Revenue property assessment files.

The Ministry of Revenue property assessment data provides both numbers of persons and gross floor area for the current stock. This assessment data was used as the basis for the utilization estimates presented in Section 4.1.2 of the study. Table 3.1 presents a comparison of the relative size of the grade-related dwelling stock according to the 1981 Census of Canada (in dwelling units) and the property assessment files (in properties) for each case study area.

Overall, the size of the grade-related stock according to the two sources is relatively close for each case study area with the exception of Toronto. In Toronto, there were some special anomolies which led to the difference.

Nonetheless, even considering the difference in Toronto, some 88 percent of the Census stock is accounted for through the assessment data.

The difference in the two data sets can be attributed to a combination of factors:

- The assessment data relates to properties while the Census data relates to dwelling units. Because the assessment definition of a dwelling unit appears to be much less rigorous than that used in the Census, it was feared that use of the assessment dwelling unit definition might lead to the inclusion of many non-self-contained units. It was considered that in the vast majority of cases, the property and the dwelling unit would be the same and this was borne out, particularly in the single-detached dwellings. In any case, since the purpose of these tabulations was to obtain a distribution of gross floor area/person ratio to apply to the Census stock, it was immaterial whether the assessment data was collected in terms of dwelling units or properties as long as it covered all occupants and the corresponding total gross floor area involved.

- The assessment data covers only owner-occupied units. This disregards two other categories, tenants (for obvious reasons) and owner-tenants. Owner-tenants refer to properties where both the owner and a tenant are present. There were two problems with these dwellings: first, it was not certain whether the Census would treat such properties as separate dwellings, collective dwellings or as a boarder-lodger type of situation; second, since the data on occupant characteristics on the assessment files do not differentiate between occupants beyond the head and the spouse, the inclusion of these dwellings would complicate the analysis of the family characteristics of the owner-occupants. Therefore, reluctantly, it was decided to exclude these owner-tenants from the analysis. They account for a significant proportion of the stock only in Toronto (over 7,000 units) and are responsible for much of the difference between the Census and assessment stock estimates. Many of these owner-tenant households would be what the Census of Canada would call multiple-family-owner-occupants of which the City of Toronto had 4,300 in 1981. These multiple-family-owner-occupants were also excluded from the utilization analysis since they could not be readily identified through the assessment data.

- Definitional differences between the Census and the assessment data also probably account for some of the difference. There are more dwelling type categories on the assessment files than in the Census and it seems likely that some of the dwellings categorized as grade-related dwellings (single-detached, semi-detached or row) in the Census might be classified as something else for assessment purposes. For example, assessment rooming houses might be called single-detached units in the Census. Whatever the definitional difference, it was considered that the distribution of gross floor area/person ratios derived for the stock of grade-related properties from the assessment records would be broadly representative of the distribution of these ratios for the Census stock of dwelling units. There seems to be no compelling reason why this would not be the case.

In addition to preparing overall estimates of the utilization of the total owner-occupied grade-related stock, estimates for each of the occupant-types were prepared as well. Because of definitional differences between the Census and the assessment files these estimates are based on a number of assumptions; however, again, they are considered to be broadly representative of the pattern of utilization for each of the groups. The sole exception to this is the single-parent family estimate where so few such families were found in the assessment records that the estimated distribution should be treated with extreme caution.

Finally, it should be noted that a similar type of exercise wherein the utilization of the tenant-occupied grade-related stock would be examined was dropped because it was considered that the estimates would be unreliable. For most case study areas, the number of tenant-occupied grade-related properties according to the assessment records was only about 50 percent of the Census of Canada estimate of tenant-occupied grade-related dwellings.

3.2 Physical Potential for Additions and Infill

Conversion Models 3, 4 and 5 relate to building additions onto existing dwellings (Model 3) or separate units on land available on lots already accommodating a grade-related dwelling (Model 4) or on land available on open space for a high-rise apartment building (Model 5). The only available source of such data was the special property files held by the City of Toronto Planning and Development Department.

The first step in assembling information on the physical potential for Conversion Models 3 and 4 in the City of Toronto was to obtain tabulations of the breakdown of the total grade-related stock in the city by zoning category. As with the utilization tabulations, these tabulations related to properties rather than dwelling units but, nonetheless, the totals were remarkably close to the Census of Canada dwelling unit figures.

Table 3.2: Comparison Of Census And City Of Toronto Special File Information On Grade-Related Dwelling Stock, City Of Toronto

	Census of Canada 1981 (Dwelling Units)	City of Toronto Special File, 1982 (Properties)	Special File /Census (Percent)
Single-Detached	49,745	47,877	96.2
Semi-Detached	48,940	44,531	91.0
Row	12,820	12,384	96.6
Total Grade-Related Stock	111,505	104,792	94.0

Source: Special tabulations from 1981 Census of Canada and City of Toronto Planning and Development Department.

The two data sets were considered to be sufficiently close that the Census stock could be taken as a proxy for the data from the City of Toronto special files in a similar way to the procedure used for the utilization tabulations. The City of Toronto special file data was standardized to the 1981 Census stock and appears in Sections 4.1.2 of the study.

For Conversion Model 5, the special tabulations obtained from the City of Toronto Planning and Development Department on the apartment stock were used unchanged. Since these tabulations referred to properties as well, there was no corresponding data from the Census of Canada which refers to dwelling units only. Unfortunately, the City of Toronto data only covers about three-quarters of the total number of apartment properties in the City because the remainder had non-residential zoning categories - no attempt was made to estimate the potential in the remaining one-quarter of the stock. The data appear in Section 4.1.2 of the study.

4.0 THE HOUSING OCCUPANCY ANALYSIS SYSTEM

The HOAS developed by the City of Toronto Planning and Development Department with financial assistance from the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Fortuitously for the Conversion and Conservation Study, the first fruits of the HOAS became available in time to form an important part of the data base for the study.

The HOAS utilizes the property records available from the Ministry of Revenue property assessment files and, by matching records for the same property in two different years, it produces information for the total housing stock on:

- Changes in the occupancy patterns within the existing stock; i.e., properties which have changed tenure;
- Losses to the stock through demolitions or conversion to non-residential use;
- Additions to the stock through new construction or conversions to residential use; and
- The characteristics of the occupants of the lost stock, the new stock and the existing stock.

Much of the potential of the HOAS has yet to be realized because it is still under development; however, the changes in occupancy patterns within the City of Toronto's existing housing stock in the 1976-1981 which were revealed by the HOAS formed a very important addition to the data base on the complex issue of conversions and deconversions in the City.

A detailed description of the HOAS will be forthcoming when the development phase of the system is completed by the City of Toronto Planning and Development Department and provided to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The HOAS will then be available to be utilized by any Ontario municipality since the system is designed to be run on the standardized Ministry of Revenue property assessment files. The information which will become available from this source represents a real breakthrough for the analysis of changing trends within Ontario's existing housing stock.

5.0 REALIZING THE POTENTIAL OF ASSESSMENT DATA

The assessment files maintained by the Ontario Ministry of Revenue contain a wealth of information on the housing stock, the stock of non-residential buildings and vacant land for all parts of the province. The information is contained in a standardized set of computerized files which theoretically should offer relatively easy access to analysts interested in exploring any number of stock and occupant-related matters. In practise, however, the assessment data is extremely difficult to utilize as a data source; there have been promising breakthroughs such as the Housing Occupancy Analysis System (described in the previous section) and some of the special tabulations prepared for this study, but generally these efforts represent only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the potential from this source.

From the experience obtained in attempting to utilize assessment data for research purposes for this study, a number of suggestions have been formulated aimed at making this potential data source available to researchers on a cost-effective reliable basis.

. Ease of access - there are two problems with regard to ease of access:

  - confidentiality: the data on the assessment files is regarded as confidential and thus cannot be released to researchers without guarantees that confidentiality will not be breached; and

  - volume: there is so much information on the files that the physical size and cost of mounting the computer tapes for the production of useable data is too daunting for most research efforts.

  Both of these problems could be solved by the production of a public use tape which would "confidentialize" the records by deleting names and addresses etc., and also omitting the vast amount of data on the file which is extraneous to most research uses. A further possibility is to reduce the files to only a sample of properties for research purposes in the same way that Statistics Canada produces the public use sample tapes from the Census of Canada. As with the Statistics Canada Census tapes, the availability of this data should be widely advertised among researchers and a charge could be made for its use to help recover some costs.

. Complete data - many of the data fields on the assessment file are either incomplete or subject to some suspicion as to accuracy because they are not necessarily up to date; this is particularly so for rental apartments where the structural information is not used in establishing the assessed value of the property. The full extent of these problems is unclear, however, this should be explored along with the costs associated with upgrading the file to ensure that all relevant data fields are complete and up to date. One potential source of superior information is municipal special files, which if computerized, could be used to update all assessment records.

- Definitions - most researchers would be using the data in concert with data from other sources such as the Census of Canada where definitions will differ in some respects. It would be useful if these differences were explored and elaborated in a sort of "Handbook for Users of Assessment Data".

- More data - the collection of additional data would likely add significantly to the costs of collecting and maintaining the assessment files and, as such, should not be undertaken without weighing the cost-effectiveness of the additional data versus the expenditures involved. However, there are areas where the data could be improved at little cost. An example of one area where the data could be significantly improved is the relationship of the occupants to the household head: at present all occupants except the owner (or tenant) and spouse (if present) are grouped together - including children, boarders, relatives, etc. - for research purposes, this breakdown could be vastly improved, probably at little cost.

- Timely data - one of the major advantages of assessment data is the fact that it is timely and is updated annually. There is apparently a possibility that the period of enumeration will be extended to every 3 years instead of annually. There can be little question that this would seriously affect the usefulness of the data. Comparability of the assessment data with other less frequently collected data would be hampered as well as periodic analysis such as the Housing Occupancy Analysis System. It would be a shame if the period is extended beyond one year.

These suggestions are in no way intended as a criticism of the Ontario Ministry of Revenue in its collection and processing of assessment data. The raison d'etre of the assessment files is to provide municipalities with the taxation base necessary for property taxes and the files no doubt perform this function admirably. They were never intended to be used as a source of data for research. However, the potential for such use of the data is too vast for it to be ignored any longer.